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Contents

Features

Architecture of Faith: An Interview with Mario Botta
By *Judith Dupré* 5

Choosing the Best Course: Renovation or Expansion?
By *E. Scott Fleming, AIA* 12

Weaving a Sacred Site Safety Net
By *Douglas R. Hoffman, AIA* 15

Departments

Editor's Page 4

Artist/Artisan Directory 24

Architects Directory 28

Just One More Thing 31



On the cover: A pair of granite buttresses that pierce the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, in Mogno, Switzerland, arch over the interior appear to embrace the structure protectively, as if defying the mountain to encroach upon the church. Both ceiling and window, the circular roof admits ever-changing patterns of light.

Photo: Enrico Cano, courtesy Mario Botta Architetto

Directory of Advertisers

Awards Program Call For Entries 31

Botti Studio of Architectural Arts, Inc. 4

Church Restoration Group 18

CM Almy 30

IFRAA Conference 32

Meyer-Vogelpohl 23

R. Geissler, Inc. 14

Rambusch 4

Rohlf's Stained Glass 30

The Holy Rood Guild 13

The Verdin Company 14

Willet Stained Glass 2

EDITOR'S PAGE

By Michael J. Crosbie



In this potpourri issue, we have the special privilege of presenting the work of Mario Botta, one of the most visionary church builders in the world today. As his interview with cover-story author Judith Dupré reveals, Botta approaches the design of architecture for worship with a passionate curiosity in the history of the site and the people who will use the building. Botta links his architecture with the past, but not in ways that are at first obvious. Rather, he interprets ancient forms, materials, and decorative motifs in his own architectural language. The genius is in how his religious structures possess architectural qualities that are at the same time timeless and very much a part of their time—modern buildings with ancient souls.


In a similar way, *Faith & Form* Managing Editor Douglas Hoffman reviews efforts in Cleveland, Ohio, to preserve older sacred places and amplify their power in the community. These "hidden treasures" are not only valuable as works of art and architecture in their own right. They also provide neighborhood identity and community cohesion. Hoffman writes about how a variety of organiza-

tions, citizen groups, academic institutions, foundations, and private individuals are working together to preserve these sacred places, providing a "safety net" in an era of shrinking congregations and escalating maintenance costs. What's happening in Cleveland, as Hoffman demonstrates, is a viable example for cities and towns across the nation.

And if you want an up-close view of Cleveland's efforts, please attend IFRAA's fall meeting, "The Treasures Within." Conferees will visit many of the houses of worship mentioned in the article. Registration information is found at the close of Hoffman's piece.

One of the perennial dilemmas for congregations is whether to expand with new buildings, or instead meet needs through renovation. Architect E. Scott Fleming's article, "Choosing the Best Course," is an excellent guide for congregations, clergy, and designers on the pros and cons of each approach, and the impacts they have on building use, budgets, and schedules.

The Oracle of Apollo's inscription, "Know thyself," is the most important step a congregation can take in deciding whether to renovate or expand. Fleming discusses a number of factors that should be considered in getting a clear picture of the congregation's immediate and long-range needs. Fleming's advice will surely save any worship community several bottles of aspirin down the road.

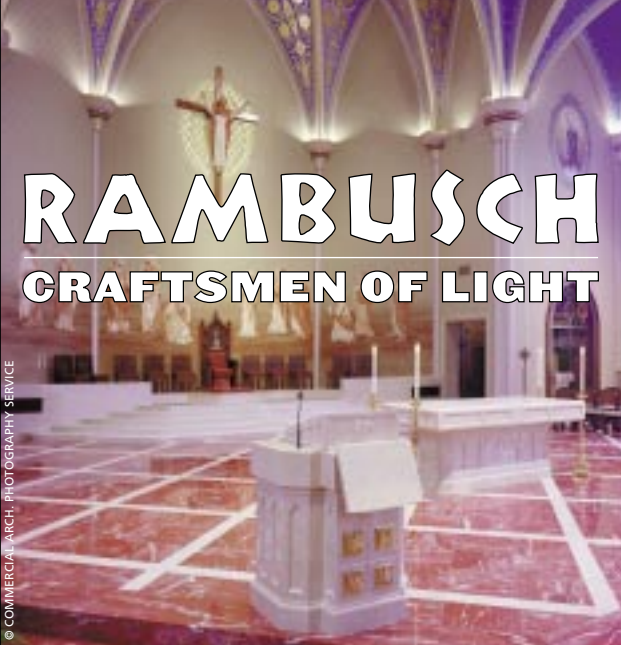
Finally, in her column, Editor Emeritus Betty Meyer considers the important role of nature in providing solace for the soul. We are learning more about the physically restorative qualities of nature (designers of health-care facilities know that natural light and views to a garden can have a significant impact on the healing process). In the same way, the presence of nature in our worship spaces not only symbolizes the power of the divine. It can nourish our spirit and remind us of the great web of creation of which we are a small part. 

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ARCHITECTURE OF FAITH: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARIO BOTTA

By Judith Dupré

Translated from the Italian by Lily Prigioniero



Photo: Robin Holland

Mario Botta is known internationally for his religious, museum, and commercial structures whose monumental forms are humanized by a masterful use of light and luxuriant stonework.

He is a church builder of first rank. His churches, shockingly unconventional in their archetypal simplicity, forgo the appearance and symbolism of traditional houses of worship. Instead, he seeks to create a timeless, primary experience of the sacred by returning to the fundamental motives of architecture—light, location, material, and form—executed within the context of a highly individual response to an equally specific landscape. Botta's churches define and elevate what is universal and, in so doing, become meaningful expressions of faith. His insistence that good building is an unalienable human right has provided the aesthetic and moral foundation of his work, which is constructed with scrupulous attention to detail, and also an insight into the architect's personal sense of responsibility, an integrity that he would not describe as spirituality but that reveals itself as such nonetheless.

His earliest ecclesiastical commission, completed when he was 20 years old, was a parish house next to the church in his family's village of Genestrerio. In 1979 he completed a subterranean library at the 17th-Century Capuchin Monastery in Lugano, and made subsequent modifications to its chapel. The past decade has seen the completion of seven of Botta's churches, including the first cathedral built in France in over a century; a synagogue; a scale re-creation of Borromini's 17th-Century church, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane; and the design of numerous other ecclesiastical projects.

Dupré: You have said, "In designing churches I have discovered the primary reasons to make architecture."

Botta: I began to construct churches when there was an avalanche that destroyed the old church of Mogno. When I went to the site, all I saw was the staked-out area where the church and cemetery had been. It made a deep impression on me. To think that while I was watching television, a mass of

JUDITH DUPRÉ is an author who writes extensively about architecture and design. This interview is an abbreviated version of the one that appears in her best-selling book, *Churches* (HarperCollins, 2001).

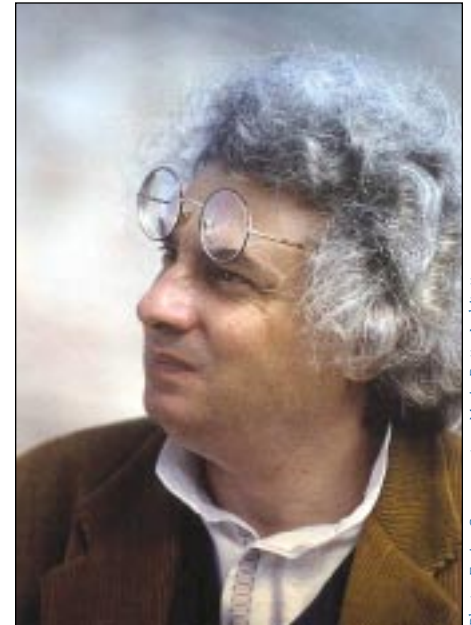
snow, 30 meters [98.4 feet] high, came down slowly, five kilometers an hour, and destroyed ten houses and the old church. Zero. Four-hundred years of history annulled.

My first reaction was, "I don't know why you want to build the church again." It's a small village, with no year-round inhabitants, there are only summer residents, so there wasn't a functional or liturgical motive. Another motive existed. The people of the village said, "We want to construct a new church because there used to be a church here." It was a way of not letting the mountain conquer them. This project helped me understand a lot of things: there is an ancient battle between man and nature; man constructs, nature destroys.

I said to myself, "I want to make something that will resist, that will last." I made an elliptical plan so that if there is a future avalanche, it could separate. There would be a physical resistance. In order to resist the mountain, I couldn't make a glass church, a cardboard church. I had to make something that could last a thousand years. I took the quarried stones and brought them to Mogno. I put in a glass ceiling because the roof is the "soft" part of the church. Nearly all the roofs of the churches in your book have been transformed because they have come down, or have burned. The glass roof is a sign of contemporary technology. It's a roof that in 50 years can be changed.

So you see my first considerations are architectural rather than ecclesiastical. At Mogno, I rediscovered a sense of gravity, a sense of light, a sense of the sun's movement over 24 hours. Every day I made a different drawing of the path of the sun, using the drawings like a magical instrument—a geometric instrument like a sundial.

There is another bit of magic in this church. The plan is an ellipse—two circles that, when united, transform into a single circle. Geometrically, as the elliptical minor axis rises, it is transformed into a circle along the major axis. This unstable form



Mario Botta

Photo: Enrico Cano, courtesy Mario Botta Architetto

becomes a tranquil, circular form. But I really didn't do anything. I only cut the form and one dimension transformed into the other. Before Mogno was an ecclesiastical invention, it was an architectural invention.

Dupré: Would you say the transformation of the Mogno plan from a square into an ellipse into a circle is a metaphor for humanity's potential spiritual transformation?

Botta: Yes, it's been interpreted that way. Rudolf Arnheim has written very nice things about that church. Every once in a while he would write me letters asking, "Is it true that the axis of the circle falls on the crucifix?" I would go to my drawings and make calculations and see that it was true, but it wasn't something I had done purposely. There were many coincidences like this. Or he would say, "Have you thought that the twelve concentric arches of the apse represent the twelve apostles?" I did the arches to demonstrate the great depth of the walls and didn't consider whether there were eleven or twelve arches. Although many symbolic and metaphoric values come

through the reading of the building, that was not my original motivation.

Dupré: For me the apse recalls the deep vistas formed by the horseshoe arches at the Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain, which imply the passage of time.

Botta: That is a beautiful interpretation. However, when I did this, my concern was more with how to cut the stone. In the end, it was a miracle even for me.

Dupré: In replacing what was destroyed at Mogno, you are, through the act of creating the building, putting yourself in a continuum of history. Its demise is implied—at some point that building will be gone.

Botta: But that's part of the history of man, which is very small compared to the history of the universe. It impresses me to see an ancient fossil. I bought a spiral-shaped fossil that is millions of years old, which I keep as a sculpture. In a million years the pyramids will probably not be here anymore. That which is man-made is ephemeral. This is our condition, to have brief moments. If we think of the Romanesque cathedrals, a thousand years old, it's a very small amount of time. My grandfather lived a century. Just think, the medieval age was only ten grandfathers ago. Everything is relative, obviously, but I like to think that architecture lasts more than the life of man. This is the measure of a man's life and his mark.

Dupré: When speaking of Mogno, you have described the need to transform the "most intense emotions in life into spaces." This church took ten years to construct. What was the genesis of the project and the community's reaction to it?

Botta: In addition to architecture's aesthetic aspect, there is always an epic tension. People can feel architecture's power. At this small church in Mogno there were a lot of controversies. I understood only later that the controversies were proportionate to the power of the project; small endeavors do not cause controversy. Mogno is about the push and pull between the mountains and man, and so it brought up some very fundamental issues. In a supermarket, even the most extraordinary one, people sense the emptiness behind it, while even the smallest church can make you aware of the tremendous energy emanating from it. People aren't stupid. They don't need a big, spectacular space. The small paintings of Paul Klee can hold their own next to other, larger paintings. It is good to know that people sense value. We need to listen to the people, listen to what they believe in. People know that they are born and that they must die. This mystery of life needs expression.



Photo: Enrico Cano, courtesy Mario Botta Architetto

The Chapel of St. John the Baptist, Mogno (1992–96, 1998) by Mario Botta is an intimate space constructed of deep, alternating courses of locally quarried gray Riveo granite and white Peccia marble that recall the lyrical masonry fronts of Romanesque churches, particularly those in Tuscany.

Dupré: Do you visit the quarries?

Botta: I love going to quarries. At Mogno, they used stones that had previously been used only as curbstones. These stones had lost their dignity, but refound it at the church. There is strong emotion at Mogno that I feel every time I go back there. New millennial spaces tend to be "soft"; even their acoustics don't answer you, they are hollow. Rocks pray.

The statue of the Virgin at Mogno is a thousand years old. We found it in an antique store. I'd like to think that this Madonna—made for a church but then stolen perhaps, held in private hands, shown in a museum, and finally sold—in the end found its way home back to a church.

Dupré: A church embodies, in its purest

form, the fundamental elements of architecture: light, threshold, and the concept of passage both physical and metaphysical. Could you discuss this in terms of the cathedral at Evry?

Botta: The challenge of designing a church is that in order to express spiritual values, you have to express corporeal values as well—physical and material values. A work well done has its own spirituality. I have never worried about symbolic values. I don't trust them. First, a church has to have a material value—it has to work in terms of construction, light, tactility. The material is a sensual factor. It's not plastic. All these aspects, if they are well done contribute to its symbolic value. I don't trust those who start out saying, "I think I'll do the Trinity."

Generally, I prefer to make a triangle and then have others interpret it as the Trinity.

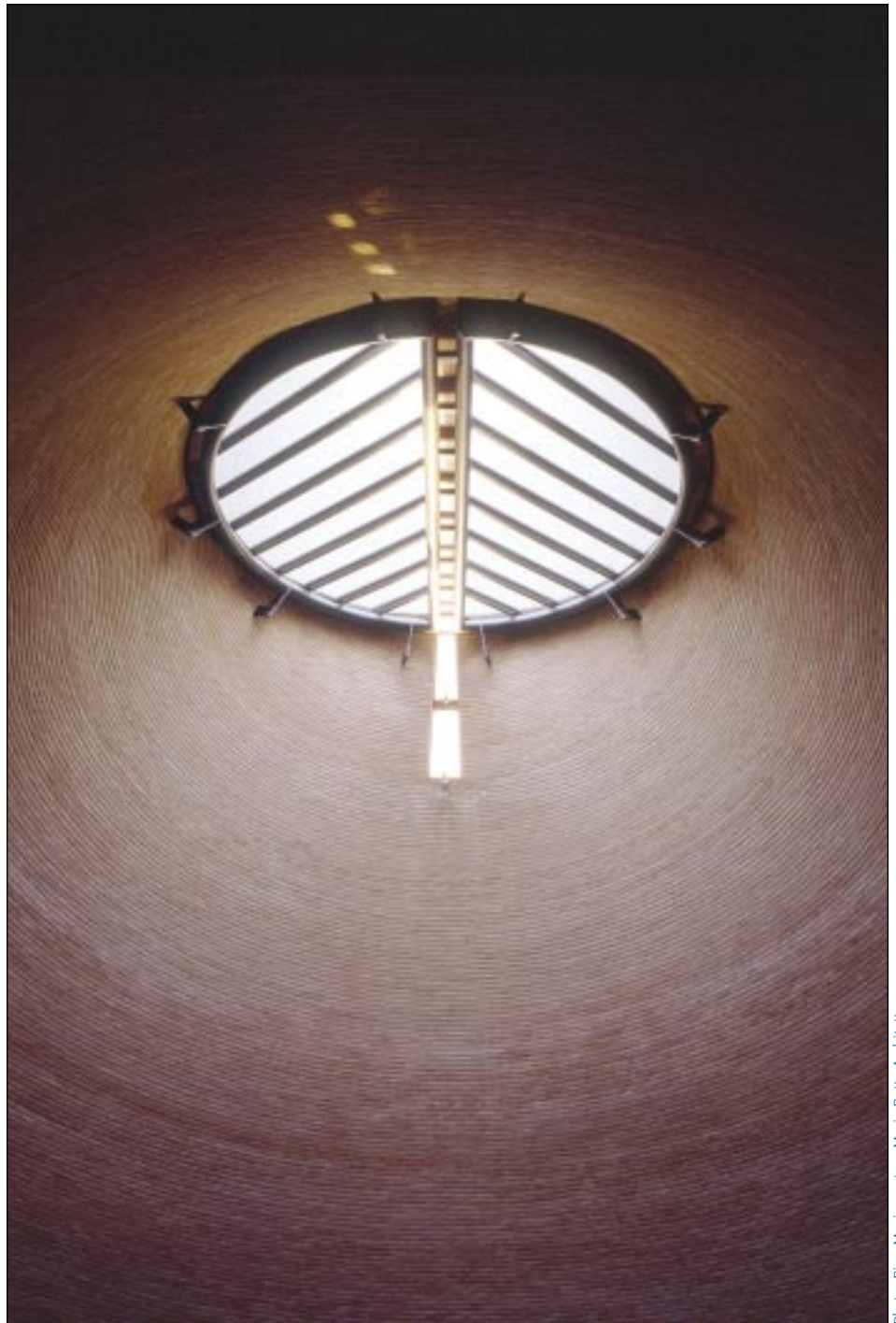
In the case of Evry, they called me and said, "We want you to build a cathedral." A cathedral! That's something that was done in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Today it's still possible to make a cathedral. There's something magical about the word cathedral. I remember what Le Corbusier wrote in *When Cathedrals Were White*. In that book, he was referring to a time when cathedrals were new, when men still believed, when mankind still had hope. Le Corbusier was the first to understand the modernity of the cathedral. He brought back that which was considered historical as a possibility for contemporary expression.

At Evry I had a problem. I was frightened by the word cathedral. So I thought of the two great Christian traditions: the centric plan of the Eastern Byzantine church, and the Western Latin-cross plan. I attempted a synthesis of these two cultures, to reunite the Eastern and Western traditions, in the spatial plan at Evry, which has a central plan with a longitudinal orientation.

For the rest of the cathedral, I tried to express the values of an artisan. The bricks are from Toulouse, brick-laying being a great French tradition, and are precisely laid. I also worked against the tradition of the French cathedral by using a very strong overhead light, which negates the tradition of medieval stained glass. I had problems with the committee because they wanted stained-glass windows. They said that in people's minds a cathedral *was* the stained-glass windows. I responded that the nature of stained-glass windows was to have darkness, not light. Chartres is powerful because you enter into darkness and then the light is revealed through its windows. At Evry, windows didn't make sense because there is overhead light. So there was a conflict.

Dupré: Many parts of a medieval cathedral are not instantly apparent. The shadows of the upper reaches, transepts, and apsidal chapels, for example, which become a metaphor for incomprehensibility. Your church spaces, in contrast, are clearly articulated, well lit, and easily understood.

Botta: I wanted to make a cathedral that was an important presence in the city, even for those who didn't believe. This is a discussion I had with the bishop, and he agreed that to build a cathedral in a new city carried responsibilities that went beyond religion. When the bishop asked me to do this project, he came to my studio and said, "Make me something that becomes a point of reference for the city, because when I go into the town I don't know where to go. There isn't a commercial street, there isn't a



The nave of the Parish Church of the Blessed Odorico has an encompassing circular nave lit by a round skylight inset with Botta's trademark herringbone-pattern mullions.

piazza or a gathering spot." Since then, other things have been constructed, but when I built the cathedral there was nothing in the city that joined the people. In this strange landscape I made an element that provided the city with a central image, a point of reference. It is a place for the faithful, but for the nonbeliever, too, it's a presence, a place of silence, a place for meditation that is available to everybody.

It's a bit like a theater. The theater is also for those who don't go to the theater because it's a place of collective imagina-

tion. It's a place where people go to buy a ticket to dream. People think, "My city is rich because it has a theater—even if I don't go to the theater." A church is a rich addition to a city, even for those who don't go to church. It becomes a human institution like a library, a bank, a stadium. So I tried to give that kind of significance to the cathedral. For the faithful, there is even more value, but even for the nonbeliever, it's important to have a cathedral in his or her city.



The Cathedral of the Resurrection (1988–95) at Evry, France, is located just south of Paris. A truncated cylinder, it is made of reinforced concrete clad inside and out with some 800,000 red bricks from Toulouse, an homage to the artisans of the medieval French cathedrals and the local masonry tradition. A ring of lime trees, like a green halo, marks a walkway along the upper reaches of the church.

Dupré: Many believe that a crucial function of architecture is to provide visual orientation: the reassurance of building types that are recognizable for what they are—a school, a power plant, a library. From the exterior, your churches do not “read” as churches. What is the obligation of the architect to provide visual landmarks?

Botta: I think that in the chaos of today’s city, good architecture has to become a point of reference. Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher, said, “Man lives when he has the possibility of orienting himself in the interior of a space.” Therefore, to live is to be capable of orienting oneself. All the great architecture of the past has provided this orientation. I go into a castle and pretty much am capable of knowing where I am. I go into Chartres, and even if the space is not entirely apparent, I have the capability of grasping the whole. This is what makes architecture livable. I would like this communal house that we call the city to have these points of reference to permit people to orient themselves. This is the opposite of what contemporary architecture represents as it reduces structures to labyrinths—cities in which people have to follow arrows and signs because architecture has lost its capacity to provide orientation. This is a value that we have to recover.

Dupré: Some have interpreted your stark, minimal structures as a resistance to beauty. Please discuss the role of ornament in a church, and the lack of ornament in your own. What aspects of your

buildings express beauty?

Botta: Architecture brings with it the idea of gravity in the sense that architecture is space organized within and by the forces that bring it to the ground. This is the value of architecture. When I make a building, I like to feel that it is bound to the ground. An airplane flies; it has another beauty. But for me, architecture has its roots in the earth. The idea of ornamentation is secondary to this. I like to think that people

can feel the nature of my spaces, that they are not distracted by decoration. “Ornament is a crime,” said Adolf Loos.

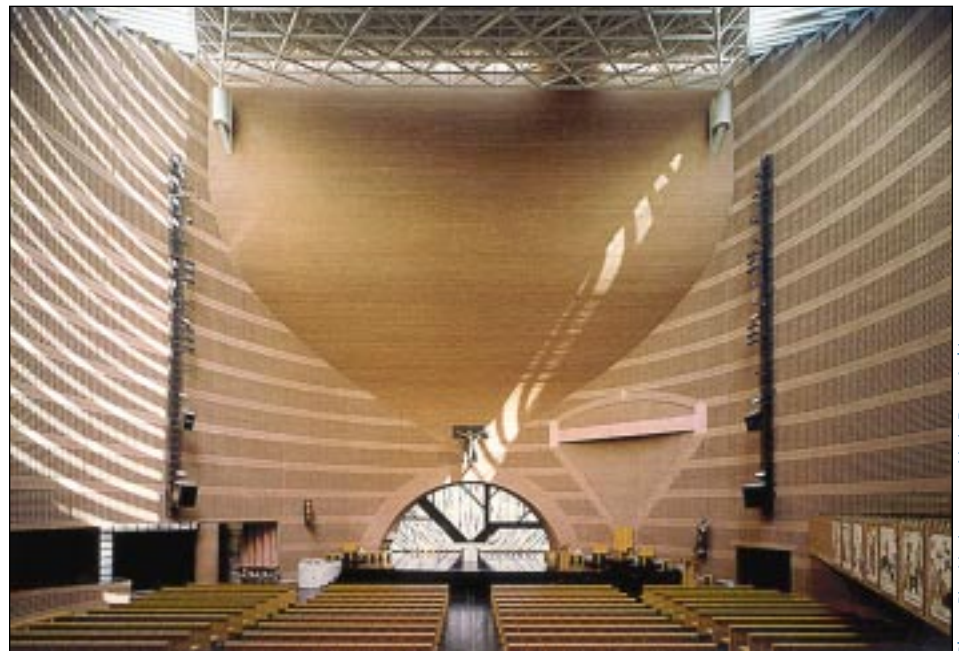
Dupré: Says Mario Botta!

Botta: The wall itself becomes an ornament. Mogno is made from drawn stone. It is not spartan or austere. Beauty is not a secondary thing; it is a primary thing. When I see the texture of the walls at Mogno, I know it is not secondary, it is not decoration. It is structural. I love this essential aspect of architecture because it is not superfluous, it is necessary. It is like the beauty of a woman without makeup. Beauty is integral to architecture.

When Enzo Cucchi came to Monte Tamaro he did not want to hear the word decoration. “I’m not coming to decorate the church, I am coming to make my mark on the church.” His marks are immediate, like graffiti, which I like very much. It is not decorative painting.

My collaboration with Cucchi was very intuitive. We spoke very few words. Cucchi would close himself up here at night to work and the next day I would see what he had done.

After I designed the windows at Tamaro, I realized that an image should be there. I asked Cucchi to make these paintings, which are based on the prayers to the Virgin that were provided by Padre Giovanni Pozzi. The paintings are quite minimal. They utilize the primitive technique of intarsio. At first, Cucchi wanted to paint faces, but then in Germany I saw an exhibit of his work that depicted hands that I really liked because hands make a gesture



Overhead skylights flood Evry with light. The sloping glass roof is inset with an equilateral triangular whose shape defines the three light sources that illuminate the interior. Botta designed the wood furnishings, marble altar, and the circular baptismal font inserted into the steps rising to the altar.

of prayer: hands open to give, hands open to receive.

At Tamaro, hands became a leitmotif for the metaphoric illustrations of the Madonna: Mary as a boat, as a flowering almond during the confines of winter, as an olive, as a cloud, as the moon, as the sea, as a circle, as the city on the hill, as the sun, as a rose, as a pomegranate rich with gracious seeds, as a column, as a restorative herb for our dry hearts, as a tall pine tree, as the queen's road, as a fortress, as a lighthouse, as a shadow, as an illustrated book that discovers the wonders of the word.

Padre Giovanni was given the grace to guide Cucchi in creating these ancient images, which are derived from the great oral tradition of the Madonna. They are painted prayers. They are sacred poems of great profundity that are based on a primitive culture, far removed from the present day, the culture of the farmers who saw the Madonna in the moon, in the grass. It is very beautiful.

The interior at Tamaro was painted black to negate space. The light enters from small, lower windows, like the light in a cave or a grotto. The light highlights Cucchi's paintings. It is not a celebration of space, it's a non-space. When people go outside, they see the mountains and the vista, but inside they must return to their essential solitude.

Tamaro's design is intended to control the form of the mountain. It belongs to the mountain. I pulled the pathway from the mountain and extended it outward. The walkway is above, the church is below. It's as if it's a correction of the profile of the mountain. It's not really a construction. I did not want to make a tiny church but to develop the horizon underneath it. What was attractive was the development of an external, horizontal pathway that leads to the kernel of the project, the chapel itself. I like to walk on top of the pathway and feel the emptiness underneath.

Dupré: Airport chapels used to be a standard fixture, and now that air travel is so common, they are disappearing. Your project at Malpensa Airport is an anomaly.

Botta: The airport chapel interests me because models from the past do not exist. A church in the middle of an airport is a curious entity. But the chapel is not just another service provided by the airport. I intend it to be a presence.

Dupré: Does it acknowledge the transient population using an airport chapel?

Botta: It is a place for travelers and for people who work at the airport. If someone has two hours, instead of reading the newspaper, they can find a place of silence. It is designed as a flower with three petals.

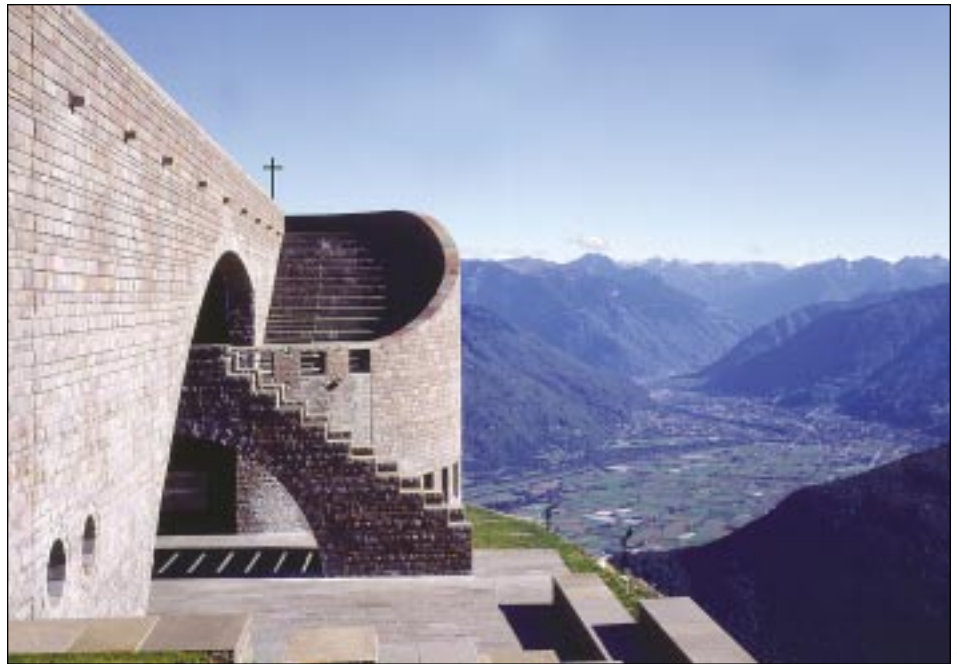


Photo: Enrico Cano, courtesy Mario Botta Architetto

The Chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Monte Tamaro (1990–96), located in a ski resort in the Swiss Alps, 5141 feet (1567 meters) above sea level, is accessible only by cable car. Made of reinforced concrete faced with rusticated porphyry, it is a hybrid design that combines the shapes of a viaduct, church, amphitheater, and tower.

Between the petals you can look out the windows and see the airplanes. It will have two spaces: one a place with biblical quotations; the other, a space for the altar, so people can decide for themselves which part of the church is most appropriate for them.

Dupré: How do you move beyond the image of the traditional church—its plan, orientation, symbolism—which is so deeply ingrained in our collective memory and has been for at least a thousand years, to create something new that is still meaningful?

Botta: This is very difficult. I think the new has to be full of memory. The new symbolic values have to be rooted in the great past. Le Corbusier described it beautifully when he put the cross in Ronchamp, saying "The cross is a sign for all Christianity. When I saw the cross come into the church, which was brought in by the workmen, I knew the work site was finished. All of humanity, at that point, took possession of the church." It is difficult to decide where to place a cross on a church because the cross is such a potent symbol of Christianity.

Dupré: You have said that memory is the territory of the architect, and also that this same history and iconography weighs heavily on the present. What have you taken from the past and what have you left behind?

Botta: When I do a house, I would also like it to be the cave of a primitive man. When I'm tired, when I'm bored, the house becomes the ultimate refuge. It is a place where I can recharge myself to confront the next day. But the house is not only mine;

the house also encompasses the myth of the group, the collective—the family and society. The house connects with history and memory. The house has rhythm, and a very strong social role. In primitive societies, the house coincides with the idea of a collective life. There wasn't just one, there were two, there were three. This collectivity protected one's privacy, yet allowed one to feel part of a group.

I would like it if the house of today could once again embody the idea of protection, of a maternal womb that defends and protects, but exists also to enable communication, because man only lives in context with others. The idea of a house brings with it the idea of patriotism because the house is never individual, it always connotes the collective. This sentiment survives in the subconscious of man and this is an important value to retain.

When I draw a house, I also draw a primitive cave. Inside the mountain is the womb where I have my house and this is the projection of the external world. There are two key elements: the cave and the opening toward light.

Dupré: Can the values of the private home be transferred to the church?

Botta: Our first encounter when we enter a church is with silence, and then with a return to memory. A church is impossible without memory; a church is the location of memory. In a church, a person is confronted with the immensity of the world. In a church a person always feels very small. This is a magical aspect of a church. The church is a



The Parish Church of the Blessed Odorico (1987–92) in Pordenone, Italy, the plan of which consists of a rectangular, colonnaded courtyard that frames a central conical bell tower, the terminus of which is cut on a diagonal and completed with a slanting circular skylight, iron belfry, and cross.

house that puts a believer in a dimension where he or she is the protagonist. The sacred directly lives in the collective. The church isn't a representation. Man becomes a participant in a church, even if he never says anything.

If I go to a museum, for instance, I confront the art, I capture the message that the artwork gives me, so I am a protagonist. This is why museums are successful—the visitors are protagonists. Museums are the new cathedrals because the museum speaks of values. It interprets the world. It is a place of great spirituality. It is another world that has an aura of love, of direct dialogue.

Dupré: Many feel a church is much different than a museum. A church, of all building types, is a place where you stop and look. In a house or a bank, you move through without looking.

Botta: Yes, the church is the archetype of architecture. When I design one, I have a special responsibility. When I design a bank, I have to resolve the bank's problems. When I do a theater, I must deal with the theatrical machine. In contrast, a church is simple. The essential rite, the liturgy, can

happen on a field. It's not complicated. A church is the place, par excellence, of architecture. It is the communal house, the house of the faithful. When you go into a church, you have to look around. It's not a theater where you wait for something to happen. When you enter a church, you already are part of what has transpired and will transpire there. This is extraordinary.

It's true, when you go into a church, you look at the architecture. Where the church is located, the place of the faithful, is much more important than its function. The function exists in an arc of time that is very limited, but the church remains. For this reason, I respect the location of churches. I have a great esteem for places of different religions, of all religions, because religious places provide testimony and have extraordinary symbolic value. The church preserves sacredness in its very location. This sense of the sacred cannot be found in a bank, a library, a theater.

Architecture, church architecture, describes visually the idea of the sacred, which is a fundamental need of man. Mankind has been capable of creating for itself this very particular kind of space. There is great


mystery in a church. For me it is a great privilege to be confronted with the design of a church, because it shelters the most powerful themes of humanity: birth, marriage, death.

Dupré: Your round stone buildings recall the ancient kivas, the worship spaces of the American Indians. You should build a church in the American Southwest. There, your monumental forms would find their perfect home.

Botta: If I could construct only churches, I would let go of everything else. Churches are the ultimate theme for architecture. The more you work with this theme, the more depth you can realize with it.

We live in a society with no values. You have to try and find values. This is a time of churches, museums, and libraries. The 1960s, in contrast, were a time of civic centers, of administrative institutions. Today, we have stadiums, where everyone comes together with ferocious, warlike energy. At the other extreme are the cultural and spiritual institutions.

Dupré: A final question: Are you finding God?

Botta: I have not found Him yet. I am searching for Him. 



Synagogue Tel Aviv

The design of the Cymbalista Synagogue and Jewish Heritage Center (1996–98), located on the campus of Tel Aviv University in Israel, synthesizes the building's two functions: a house of worship and a cultural meeting place.

The interior shows Botta's refined use of stone and wood, and the overhead illumination that is a hallmark of his religious buildings.

Photo: Pino Musi, courtesy Mario Botta Architetto

CHOOSING THE BEST COURSE: RENOVATION OR EXPANSION?

By E. Scott Fleming, AIA



Religious architecture has changed dramatically over the years. Consider the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. This inspiring Gothic structure was built in the heart of the city at that time and took 87 years to complete. It was the center of the community with one main purpose – to serve as a house of worship.

Our religious buildings today are very different. While they still have a core role as a worship center, they are also much, much more. Perhaps the greatest shift is that many churches and synagogues have become communities in and of themselves. Members look to their congregations to meet their worship desires while also often fulfilling needs for education, recreation, music, and social programs. All this can translate into a monumental task when congregations are faced with determining whether they should build new facility to meet their needs, or whether an expansion/renovation of their existing building will do.

This article addresses the efforts that a congregation should undertake in contemplating a major building program. The projects used to illustrate major points in the article have been completed or are underway either in Memphis, Tennessee, or in suburbs surrounding the city. To some, this process may seem arduous. It is, however, necessary in order to make the most effective decision regarding new construction or an expansion/renovation.

The Master Plan – Laying a Solid Foundation

Many congregations tend to follow the motto, "Ready! Fire! Aim," when it comes to building, and they can end up paying a steep price for being disorganized. Such an illogical, knee-jerk plan of attack invariably leads to regrets about earlier building decisions when future phases are contemplated. To avoid poor long-term planning, a master plan can serve as the road map for any successful building program and is a necessary first step. This important document must be tied to the institution's vision plan. The vision plan defines what the church or synagogue wants to be – a local neighborhood institution, or a regional concern. The plan addresses worship style and the ministries present or future. The information in the vision plan is required to begin the master planning process. It helps to define for the architect both the spaces and the types of spaces that are required to meet the congregation's current needs while also planning for the future. An effective master plan accounts for the ministries that are envisioned for both the short- and long-term, but it is also flexible enough to change when unforeseen future space needs are required.

Many urban congregations need to address current or potential changing demographics. It would be hard to find a congregation in any mid-size or large city in America that has not wrestled with this ques-

E. SCOTT FLEMING, AIA, is president of Fleming/ Associates/Architects, Inc. in Memphis. He has more than 20 years of experience working with congregations of all sizes in both the design of new facilities and the expansion/renovation of existing church facilities.

tion. As members move to the suburbs, congregations must evaluate whether they need to or should move in order to be where a significant number of their members may be relocating. This may relate to the wish to be a local, neighborhood, or regional congregation. But it also is tied with the ministries and vision for the current community. Congregations that choose to move can often open up opportunities for other households of faith, which will be discussed later in this article.

The next step is to complete congregational surveys and to conduct focus groups with leaders including clergy, program staff, and the building committee. Some congregations choose to survey their entire membership to help identify trends and desires. This step serves to confirm the vision plan, provides an opportunity for the leadership to articulate the space requirements that they foresee for individual ministries, and also gives the leadership a sense of ownership in the design program. During this process the architect partners with leaders to make sure that all key building requirements are thoroughly addressed.

The vision plan, surveys, and focus groups provide the data that is necessary to identify major interior building components and exterior features that are necessary in order for the congregation to meet current and future member and ministerial needs. Without this effort, it is impossible to define whether new construction or an expansion/renovation is best for the congregation. Depending on the congregation's size and programs, a range of issues must be considered. Each of the following, which would be explored in depth, must be addressed:

- **Parking/Site Access:** The number of spaces that will be required, including parking per service if the congregation has more than one service, must be calculated. Access and egress from the church and related facilities must be figured. Alternatives to on-site parking should be explored if the site is restricted.
- **Worship:** The congregation's worship style – traditional, contemporary or both – will affect seating, audio-visual, and other features.
- **Music:** Requirements for piano, organ, and other instruments must be noted. Spaces for the choir, if any, including rehearsal space, must be allotted. If there is a music school, the number and type of classrooms must be defined. Space for drama might also need to be provided.
- **Recreation:** Typical outdoor and indoor components including soccer and baseball fields as well as indoor uses for basketball, volleyball, aerobics, and weight training must be identified. Some institutions include other specialized spaces such as swimming pools, racquetball, bowling, game rooms, and craft rooms, so these spaces must be taken into consideration.
- **Offices:** Administrative spaces for clergy and program staff must be defined, including their desired adjacency to worship, music, and education spaces.

- **Classrooms:** Learning environments for adults, youth, and children must be identified within the plan. Classrooms may often have a dual purpose such as serving the religious education during services and a preschool during the week.
- **Nursery:** Every religious facility requires a nursery that is inviting and safe. For families with infants and younger children this may significantly impress them regarding the institution.
- **Preschool/Day School:** For congregations providing this outreach, special provisions for preschool or a day school must be evaluated including the size of the school(s) and the ages of students that are accommodated (i.e. preschool, K-6, K-8)
- **Mother's Day Out/Kid's Day Out:** Like classrooms, the nursery may also serve as space for programs of this type. Dual use can result in significant cost savings for a congregations since they will maximizing the use of their space on a daily basis.

Case Studies

Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC), a project our office is currently involved in, demonstrates the importance of master planning in the decision-making process. The congregation had identified in their vision plan that they wanted to be a 10,000-member regional church with a preference to retain their current east Memphis location. They thoroughly discussed whether or not this could be accomplished on their current site due to their limited acreage. The amount of on-site parking provided was the critical issue.

The answer was found by working through the master planning process noted above. The final solution was to create a use agreement with two commercial shopping centers that are adjacent to the church. CUMC members are allowed to park in defined areas of both centers on Sundays and at other times. If this arrangement changes in the future, the church could be faced with acquiring more land or they may have to construct a structured parking facility on land currently occupied by their playground and recreation fields. In the meantime, rather than leaving their current location for the suburbs, the church's commitment to the area spurred them to find a creative solution to one of their most pressing issues.

The completed master plan includes options for the church's membership to evaluate based on critical factors such as land availability, the condition of existing structures, initial and life-cycle costs, and long-term benefits.

Changing demographics may be one of the biggest challenges facing many congregations. Answering how this issue will be addressed relates, as stated earlier, to the institution's vision and its commitment to the community. In some instances, a move will be necessary. Other times, making a commitment to a current location is the best option both for the present and the future. For some, this will be the deciding factor regarding whether they will expand their current facilities or move to a new location.

Central Church, a 7,000-member congregation, decided that constructing a new facility in a Memphis suburb east of its existing location was the best option for the congregation based on their current and future facility requirements and the congregation's changing demographics. Their decision to move resulted in a chain of kingdom-building events that has benefited not only the Central Church congregation, but two other groups as well.

Crichton College had been meeting for years in the facilities provided by Central Church. However, the college was outgrowing the church's ability to meet its needs as enrollment increased. At the same time, World Overcomer's Church, which had a midtown location, was outgrowing its facilities and needed to move closer to its membership. In a scenario that benefited everyone, Crichton purchased the World Overcomer's facility, which is closer to the higher-education center of the city. World Overcomer's purchased the existing Central Church property and Central Church moved to its new site and

constructed a new facility to meet its needs. The partnership between the two churches and the college is a wonderful illustration of what can happen when people work together to meet the needs of their members and users. Each entity now has the facilities that it will require for years to come – facilities that are located near the populations that comprise their current and potential future membership.

Land availability also affects what option is best. While a congregation might desire to remain at its current location, this may not be the best option for the long term. In some instances, the congregation will have to weigh whether it has the financial resources to purchase adjacent land, if available, or whether such funds would be better invested in a new location.

Emmanuel Methodist Church had outgrown its existing suburban facilities. Only one large parcel of land adjoining the church's current facility was available for purchase. If the church passed on this opportunity, developers would have gobbled up the parcel instead and the church would have eventually run out of available space to expand on its existing location. Prior to purchasing the site, a master plan was prepared to confirm that the additional acreage would be adequate to meet future needs. By purchasing the site, Emmanuel Methodist was able to retain its existing location rather than moving, and is on the way to becoming a regional church.

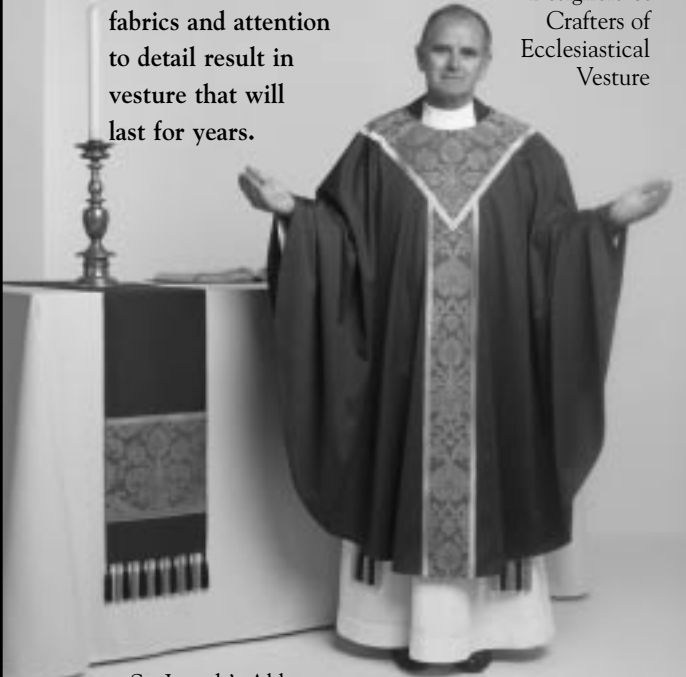
At the other end of the spectrum is the 1,000-member, suburban-based Germantown Church of Christ, a congregation that had outgrown its existing facilities. The church was located on a major roadway but landlocked, preventing either an expansion or renovation on the current site. A move to a new location provided an opportunity to create a new image for the church while also building the facilities that will accommodate its needs well into the future.

For many congregations, cost may be the major determining factor regarding which option to choose. The least expensive short-term

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move may lead to the most expensive long-term cost if careful planning is not put into place.

For example, Bartlett United Methodist Church, located in another Memphis suburb, had also outgrown its facilities. The cost for the church to build the facilities that it required on a new site, including the purchase of land, was estimated at \$16 million. Real estate agents specializing in church sales estimated that the congregation would receive between \$1 and \$2 million for its existing facilities, resulting in a potential investment for new construction of \$14 million. The cost, however, for building a new sanctuary and classroom space on the church's existing site was estimated at \$7 million--a figure that was more in line with what the church felt that it could invest. The difference in cost, coupled with a preference to stay at the existing location, lead the congregation to expand on the present site rather than moving to a new location.

New Construction versus Expansion – More Pros and Cons

Membership demographics, land availability, and cost are certainly the cornerstones to consider when contemplating new construction versus an expansion/renovation. But there are also other factors to keep in mind.

New construction provides a clean slate upon which to work. There is no need to work around construction staging areas or the requirements of workers themselves. Installing the required infrastructure – sewer, water, and electrical lines – is usually easier to do on a new site than navigating around existing systems. New construction also provides an opportunity to create an entirely new image for a congregation, if desired, in terms of both design elements and materials.

Congregations that opt for new construction have a range of options to consider, if they choose, regarding the sale of their present facility in order to help fund the new construction. Many congregations have sold their existing facilities to other congregations, as in the case of

Central Church and World Overcomer's. Others choose to sell their properties for commercial development or for conversion into city recreation centers, offices, or antique malls. Zoning restrictions may ultimately dictate use.


Expansions/renovations provide an opportunity for a congregation to retain their heritage while maintaining a commitment to a defined area within the community. They make a statement that they are there to stay though the area around them might change. An expansion obviously includes new construction, which is ideally tied with existing facilities. In the case of Bartlett Methodist, the new sanctuary and classroom space was constructed between the existing sanctuary and the church's life enrichment center, which houses classrooms, the gymnasium, and related recreation facilities and a kitchen.

Cover All the Bases

The bottom line is often that congregations can only afford to band-aid their facilities for so long. Each congregation must consider the long-term infrastructure costs at its current location versus moving to a new facility.

Congregations that carefully analyze their current and long-term requirements based on both their vision plan and a successfully executed master plan will be in an optimum position to determine the best course for their facility needs. Successful planning takes time. Facility requirements must be continually evaluated based on the congregation's changing requirements. Institutions that are willing to invest in these all-important steps will ensure that they have covered all their bases in order to make the best use of their facility and financial resources. Most importantly, they will be working to ensure that they have the facilities to support the work that God is calling them to do within their communities while providing spaces that will support the spiritual, educational, and recreational needs of their members. ■


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WEAVING A SACRED SITE SAFETY NET

By Douglas R. Hoffman, AIA



Photograph by Mike Levy

Illuminated Tower, Pilgrim Congregational Church, 2592 W. 14th St., Cleveland.

Every community, large or small, has sacred sites that enrich and enhance their streets, neighborhoods, and citizenry. However, not every community has grasped this essential role religious buildings play in the lives of its people and its sense of community identity. Many historic churches and synagogues are left to fend for themselves, often struggling with declining memberships due in part to residential population shifts, diminishing financial

DOUGLAS R. HOFFMAN, AIA, a partner of Weber Murphy Fox Architects, recently moved to Cleveland to lead the Religious Design Studio for his firm. Doug is chairing the October 2003 Cleveland IFRAA Conference with the support of the many local organizations cited above. Additionally, Doug is the Managing Editor of Faith & Form magazine.

capabilities, and mounting operational costs. How can a community respond? Can neighborhoods be empowered to save the very buildings that once defined the community and its people?

The answer is an emphatic YES! Throughout major cities and other communities in the U.S. there is a growing number of support organizations directed specifically to this task. Partners for Sacred Places, a non-profit organization based in Philadelphia, is a prime example. Over the past 15 years of its existence it has continued to grow, provide educational opportunities, foster and support local programs in other communities, develop printed resources, and offer hands-on counsel to hundreds of churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship throughout its region. More

recently, with the introduction of its new tool kit, "Your Sacred Place is a Community Asset: A Tool Kit to Attract New Resources and Partners," Partners for Sacred Places has developed a particularly useful resource for virtually any faith community engaged in social and community based ministry.

While similar programs abound in communities around the country, few cities have a network of support organizations that focus on religious art and architecture as intensely as does Cleveland, Ohio. Did I say Cleveland? Yes. The positive collaboration and intertwining of "sacred site safety net" efforts here could well be a role model for cities throughout the country. Cleveland's academic community, historical building society, denominational judicatories, philanthropic foundations, and private donors have

all played a role in preserving and enhancing the city's religious diversity and wealth of sacred art, architecture, and artifacts.

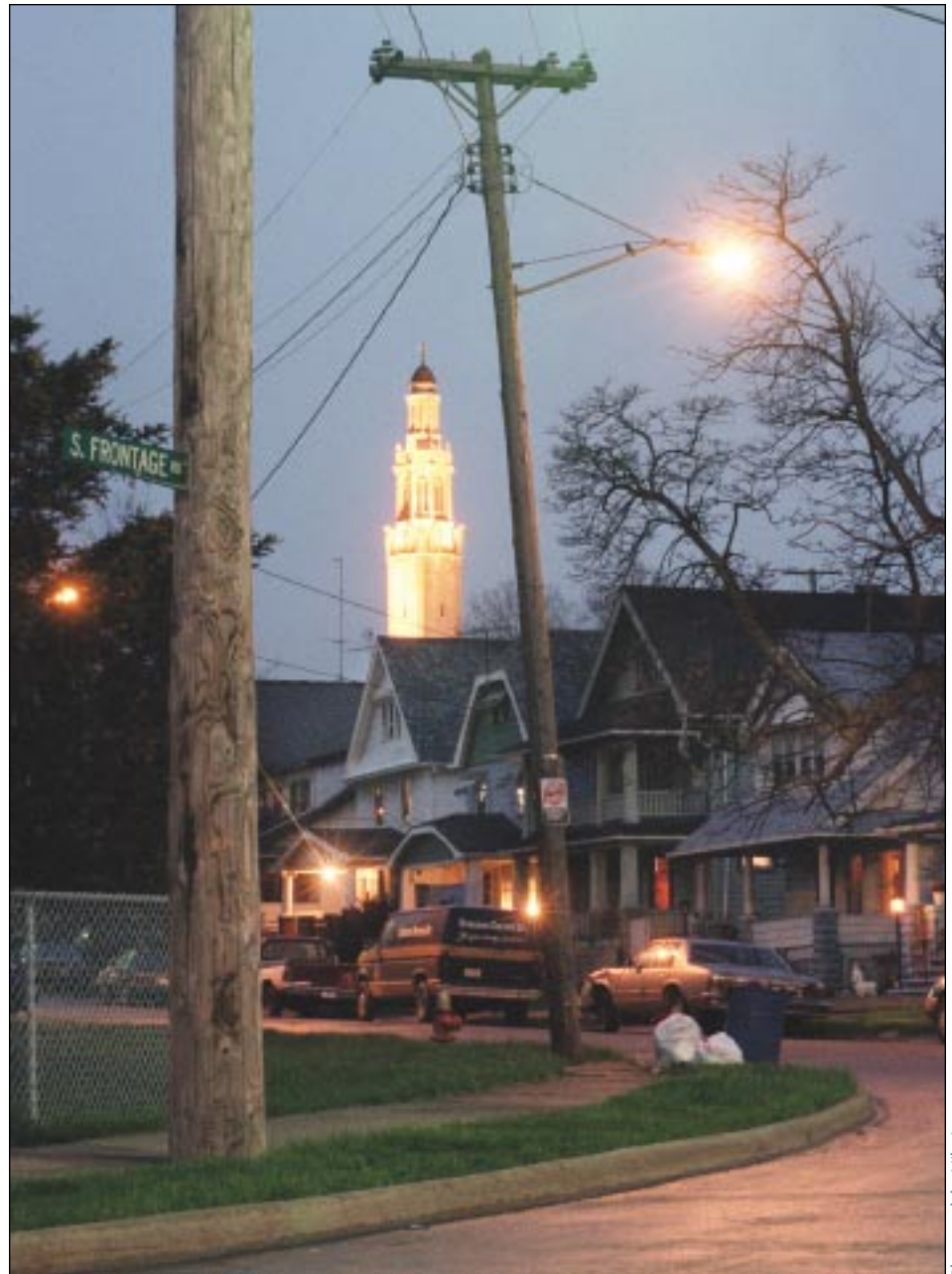
Education

Among the many colleges and universities in northeast Ohio, several are actively engaged in supporting religious facilities through the Center for Sacred Landmarks, a research center housed in the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. Eighteen years in the making and the brainchild of a paleontology professor at Cleveland State, the Center's mission is to provide research, service, and education concerning northeast Ohio's sacred places, particularly its houses of worship.

I asked Mike Tevesz, Director of the Center, how a paleontologist became such a strong supporter of religious art and architecture. His response, characteristic of this thoughtful, well-spoken professor, was the "common ground of my vocation and avocation is an attraction to beauty and mystery. The shell architecture of clams and snails, for example, is captivating in its form and color. Similarly, the pearl-like iridescence of the chambered nautilus was reproduced by Louis Comfort Tiffany in some of his opalescent glass windows. Outstanding religious buildings embody an analogous beauty and mystery in combined effects of their morphology and decoration."

With co-founders Mike Wells, Thomas Lewis, and Thomas Hallet, Tevesz has produced a video on religious buildings, mounted public photo and informational exhibits, and edited several monographs on specific religious sites, historic stained glass, and other sacred artifacts in the Cleveland metropolitan area and northeast Ohio Region. He now dedicates much of his time to the Center, on loan from his academic department, to pursue the four basic goals of this organization: (1) research and document the architectural and aesthetic features of northeast Ohio's religious structures; (2) provide guidance or referrals to religious institutions that wish to preserve or renovate their archival materials and artworks, including stained glass; (3) research and document the human and social services engaged in by religious institutions; and (4) research and document the role that various religious institutions and their members have played in the history of Cleveland and the northeast Ohio region.

The Center for Sacred Landmarks serves as a model for the development of related initiatives at other academic institutions, and is now one of five research and public service organizations focused on houses of worship in northeast Ohio. Similar programs have



Photograph by Mike Levy

St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, 10205 Lorain Ave., Cleveland.

been have been organized at Kent State University, the University of Akron, Youngstown State University, and (most recently) Lorain County Community College. Each of the participants has an active program of research, education, and service. These resources might be university-accredited courses on preserving religious structures and exploring their relation to urban neighborhoods; regional database on the names and locations of houses of worship and their programs; sacred artifact inventories (including photographic documentation); and community-based guided tours of historically significant religious buildings. Raising public consciousness of these local treasures and providing valuable resources to assist in their preservation are the common threads.

Preservation

Speaking of preservation, the Cleveland Restoration Society's Sacred Landmarks Assistance Program provides ongoing support to faith groups as they attempt to preserve their historic houses of worship. With preservation as its mission focal point, CRS provides educational, technical, and limited financial assistance. Local program associate Daria Gasparini, cites churches on Cleveland's near East Side as success stories for recycling religious buildings by new faith groups. For example, many East Side synagogues were abandoned as the predominantly urban Jewish population migrated to the eastern ring suburbs after World War II. They left behind magnificent temples that several African-American and minority

congregations purchased, preserved, and enhanced for their own use.

The Sacred Landmarks Assistance Program sponsors regular religious building tours, including a community favorite, the Mother's Day Trolley Tour. Mothers and family members are treated to a covered trolley tour of three-to-four historically significant religious buildings, with local historians providing a wealth of anecdotes on the buildings, neighborhoods, and Cleveland history.

In the arena of technical assistance, the program has participated with the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland to underwrite joint surveys assessing several local parish churches for structural deficiencies and energy-consumption problems. These in-

depth surveys yield valuable insights for improving basic building structure and energy efficiency through regular maintenance programs, educational ventures, and technical assistance resource materials.

An unusual facet of the program is due to the desire of a single donor to enhance the visibility of steeples and towers. The "Steeple Lighting Program" will help offset the project costs for local parishes that initiate and implement a lighting program featuring the architectural towers and/or steeples of their respective religious buildings. Daria expressed some caution that lighting steeples is not an easy task considering the conflicting financial demands on congregations. Although only two churches

have participated in the program thus far, she hopes others will take heart from the first participants and "see the light."

Planning

Downtown Cleveland is home to the urban planning graduate program of Kent State University's Department of Architecture. The Center for Urban Design Collaboration (CUDC) engages students in joint academic and community planning exercises. One successful venture brought architecture and urban planners to St. Stephen's Parish Church, an historic structure built in the late-1800s by an immigrant German congregation and now home to a racially and ethnically mixed congregation. The stone edifice is not uncommon to its period, but the true treasure lies within. Historic stained glass designed by the Bavarian Institute of Art in Munich and finely painted Stations of the Cross complement a richly carved all-hardwood reredos behind the main and side altars. The freestanding pulpit with baldachino was on display at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago before being reassembled and commissioned in the nave of St. Stephen's. The combined effect is a masterpiece woven from the religious artwork and craft of artisans that regularly draws tourists from all over the city and state.

In spite of this jewel, the surrounding inner city neighborhood declined to the point where it was not uncommon to observe drug deals within close range of the church steps. When the congregation struggled to keep up with high operational costs, there was talk of closing St. Stephen's. Fortunately, the CUDC neighborhood development study targeted St. Stephen's as an historic anchor to help a neighborhood in transition. Through this planning effort attention was paid to the rich history of the church, its members past and present, and the pride it generated within the neighborhood. The attention paid-off. Funding was obtained to implement neighborhood improvements, including better lighting, paving, and landscaping around the church. Community identity and self-respect ascended. Developers were attracted to participate in the process and now the neighborhood boasts newly renovated homes and the first ecologically sensitive housing development in Cleveland. Eco-Village uses "green" building technologies and materials to provide single- and multi-family row housing within a block of the church. Sales are robust and the neighborhood is being successfully transformed from a lost cause to a desirable place to live.



Photograph by Mike Levy

St. Iosaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, 5720 State Rd., Parma.



Steeple, First Presbyterian Church (the Old Stone Church), 91 Public Square, Cleveland.

Partnering

Bishop Anthony Pilla of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland is known as an innovator. His greatest contribution may well be his program, The Church in the City, launched over 10 years ago to help restore urban churches by partnering city, suburban, and rural congregations. Sister Rita Mary Harwood, who administers the program for the Diocese of Cleveland, attributes the success of the program in part to the extensive consultative process that led to the implementation of the program.


"This process of involving local parishes, diocesan staff, local and civic leadership numbering into the thousands has built a strong foundation for The Church in the City," says Harwood. "We are committed to a presence in urban areas, this is of extreme importance to the Diocese." She credits The Church in the City program for addressing the political issues, policies, and practices that have facilitated outmigration, and is confident it has made a difference in stemming that tide. As Harwood observed, "out-migration is much more on our civic agenda than when we began this program in 1994."

Consultation and guidebooks established by the diocese encourage parishes to form alliances across geographical, economic, and racial boundaries, and to choose partnerships with congregations having similar interests. Key determinants for forming these parish-to-parish relationships are opportunities to develop initiatives that improve youth and adult education; issue orientation on employment and fair housing opportunities; and advocacy for reversing poli-

cies that promote out-migration. Strong bonds have been forged between many urban and suburban churches to the point where members regularly attend mass at each other's parish, sponsor common events, share choirs, and even contribute to each other's social and capital improvement efforts. The reward for several parishes is not only cultural enrichment, but actual growth in membership as newcomers are attracted to the diversity of the parish partnerships.

What's in store for the future? Sister Rita Mary hopes "that this vision becomes a part of our way of thinking. That is the way it will truly enhance our communities. It's about bringing people together to allow lives to touch each other. The Church in the City initiative continues to work on revitalization of the urban community to create places of safety, good education, and good housing; not segregated by economy, race, or ethnic background."

Want to Learn More?

These are but a few vignettes from a rich storybook illustrating the safety net for sacred sites in the Cleveland area. You are invited to learn more by attending the 2003 IFRAA Conference to be held in Cleveland October 16-18, 2003 (for more information and a conference brochure, contact Anieca Lord of the American Institute of Architects at alord@aia.org, and check out the IFRAA/AIA website at www.aia.org). The theme "The Treasures Within" is a metaphor for the role religious buildings play in our urban communities as spiritual, civic, and social centers, and as repositories of sacred art, craft, and architecture. Tours will include the examples cited here and others where new faith groups have inherited or purchased older religious facilities to carry on the tradition of stabilizing city neighborhoods. The majesty of religious art and architecture provides the common thread uniting these disparate urban congregations. 

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Notes & Comments



Reflections on Sacred Space

Editor's Note: Architect Frank Orr of Brentwood, Tennessee sent the following letter reflecting on the Editor's Page column in Vol. 35, No. 3., 2002.

My 40-plus years of practice has been dominated by the design of churches. Many times something has caused me to ponder the term, "sacred space," but I have never been able to determine or settle on what for me that means or ought to mean.

I can agree that there are sacred places, and that some of these may be spaces; but the fact that they are spaces seems to me to be secondary to the quality of sacredness imposed by something transcendental that

has happened there. Significant examples include the World Trade Center site, perhaps some or all of the Nazi death camps, and sites of natural disasters such as floods, tornados, or earthquakes.

I have visited many of the world's "A List" of religious buildings, defined as those designed and erected for religious purposes. Most, at least among those in Europe where many are found, are more like museums than living spiritual institutions. There are several I would call excellent, but for the most part, this is because of their architecture rather than any spiritual experience when we visit them. Indeed, one of my

favorites among these is in fact now a museum, the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Having been erected as a magnificent church, and converted to a mosque when the Ottoman Turks took over the country, it eventually became a museum when Turkey became a secular state. It is a spectacular space and an astounding structural achievement for its time, and while it literally thrills me as architecture, for me it does not meet the criteria for a sacred space.

Probably the most moving spiritual/architectural experience I have had was a visit to the Protestant Chapel at Dachau (interior, left). I confess that I cried. The Jewish and Catholic chapels may be stirring architecturally but they failed to move me in any spiritual way. This structure, and I hesitate to call it a building for it is unenclosed, brought me the closest I have ever been to acknowledging the existence of a sacred space. However, the reason for this is not because of what the Chapel is for itself; it is only so as a result of what happened at this site before the Chapel was built. If this Chapel were found anywhere else it would only be an architecturally interesting artifact, with questionable spiritual qualities.

Perhaps some natural sites could qualify as sacred, if one is moved by them to ponder the power, majesty, and glory of God as He has expressed it in His creation. The Grand Canyon, the great natural waterfalls, the stunning vistas found in the Alps, the Rockies, and other mountain ranges, particularly moving sunrises and sunsets, the sea in all its expressions, and even storms can be seen in this way, and should be. However, the sacredness we feel in these settings is because of what God has done, not man.

This leads me to the conclusion that we cannot create sacred space or spaces. Such places become sacred only because of what God does in those places. For us as designers to assume that we can create sacred space strikes me as both futile and arrogant. Just because we may call a space sacred does not make it so. Only God can do that. We can, through our gifts and skills and the participation of our clients, perhaps create spaces which lift the emotional spirits of those who use them, may try to remove or avoid intrusions which might detract from a spiritual experience, and hope to enhance the likelihood that spiritual connections may be made there, but that's about as far as we can go. My belief is that the sacredness of any space, no matter who designs it, only comes when God makes it so, not when man tries to do so.

Notes & Comments (continued)



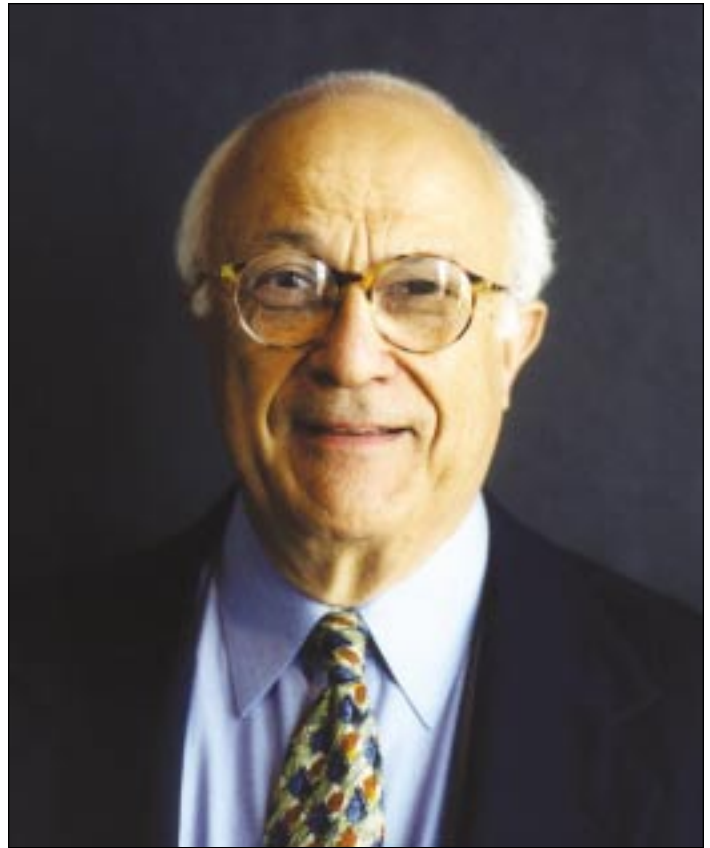
Willet Wins Conover Award

E. Crosby Willet is the recipient of the 2002 Elbert M. Conover Award, presented by IFRAA. The award recognizes a non-architect who has had a profound influence by his or her work in the field of ecclesiastical architecture.

Willet has a long a varied history in stained glass. He started working in stained glass in his father's studio in 1943 while still a high school student. In 1950, after apprenticing with the Blenko Glass Company, he became a full-time employee of the Willet Stained Glass Studio in Philadelphia, which was soon to become the largest in the country, with nearly 100 artists and craftsmen and whose windows can be viewed in churches, temples, and cathedrals in every state and numerous foreign countries. In 1964 he became president of the firm and continues in that capacity today.

Willet attended his first conference of the Church Architectural Guild (which was to become IFRAA) in 1954, and has seen the organization change from a small group of church architects into a multifaceted group of artists, craftspeople, clergy, and ecclesiastical leaders. Willet has served on the IFRAA Board since its inception in 1979, is past-president of the American Society for Church Architecture (another of the merger groups that became IFRAA), the Stained Glass Association of America, and is a Senior Member of the American Society of Appraisers.

A special note: Willet's father, Henry Lee Willet, was the Conover Award recipient in 1963. Congratulations, Crosby.



Frey Award Goes to Finegold

Boston architect Maurice N. Finegold, FAIA, is the recipient of 2002 Edward S. Frey Award, presented by IFRAA. The Frey Award, given for outstanding achievement, is IFRAA's highest honor for an architect working in the field of religious architecture. Edward Frey directed the Architectural program of the Lutheran Church of America for more than 20 years and was a key participant in each of the three organizations that combined to form IFRAA in 1978. He was a dynamic force who preached nationally about the need for the Spiritual as well as the practical in the creation of religious buildings.

Finegold has been practicing architecture since 1958, after he received his Master of Architecture degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Subsequently, he established his own firm and is now the president of Finegold Alexander + Associates in Boston.

How faith is expressed in form, and the design of sacred space, are a particular interest of Finegold, and to date he has contributed to more than 20 design projects for religious buildings, monuments, and icons. In 1991, Finegold was commissioned to design a new synagogue - his first - in Omaha, Nebraska. Many other commissions, for synagogues and other buildings for Jewish communities, followed in rapid succession, three of which have received IFRAA and *Faith & Form* Design Awards. In each he bases his work on what his clients value from the past, current needs, and dreams for the future.

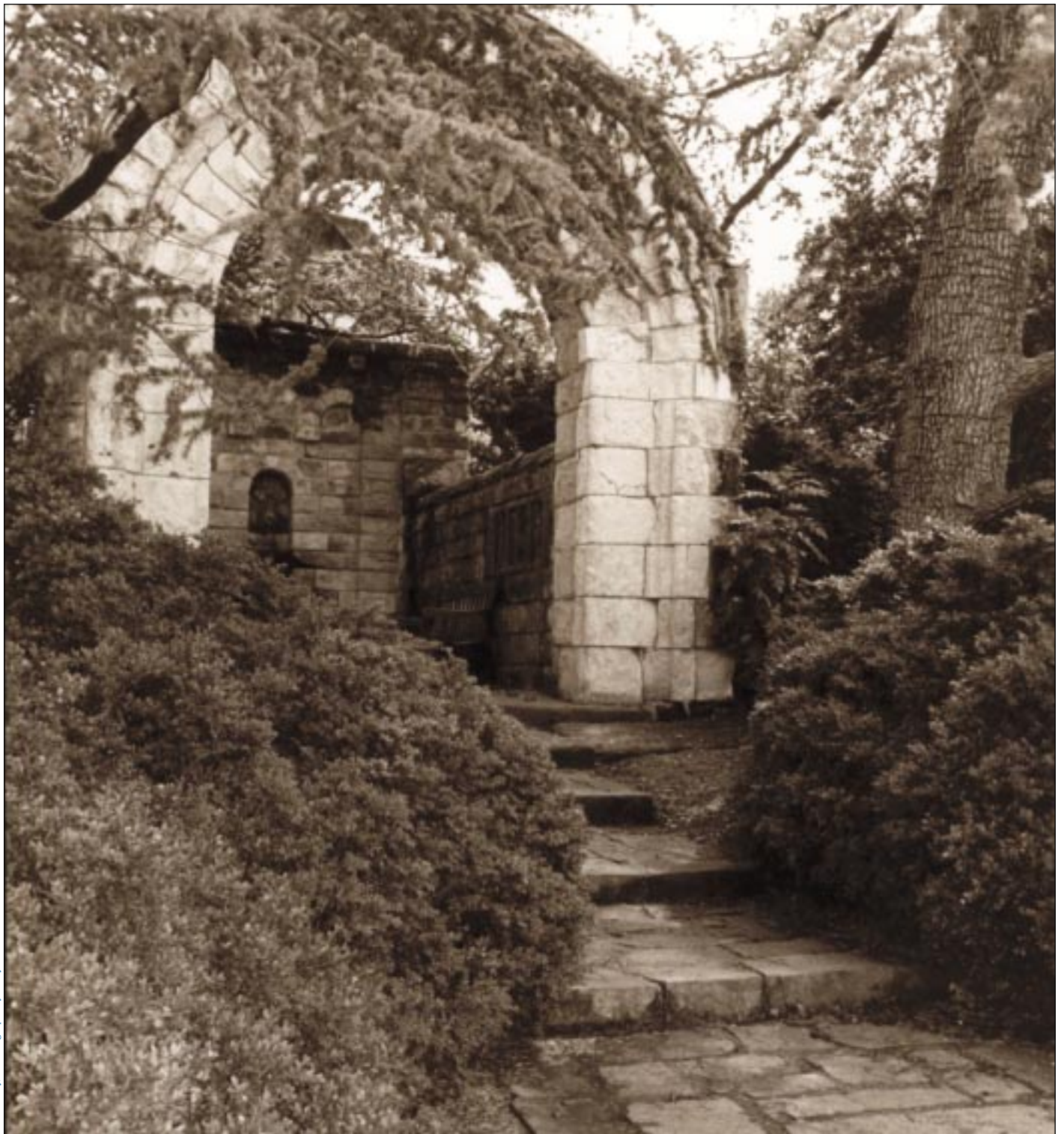
As a recipient of the Frey Award, Finegold joins the ranks of others who have been recognized by IFRAA, among them Nils Schweizer, Edward Larabee Barnes, and Edward A. Ware. Congratulations, Moe.

Quote of Note

"It is better to think of church in the ale-house, than to think of the ale-house in church."

— Martin Luther

Notes & Comments (continued)



"Sanctuary." Photograph by Mary Taft

Photo Exhibit at National Cathedral

The personal experience of visiting Washington National Cathedral is the subject of a new photography exhibit at the Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The exhibit, "Seeing the Light: Reflections of the Spiritual," displays 150 of the over 400 photographs submitted

in the recently completed juried photographic event sponsored by the Cathedral.

Professional and amateur photographers were invited to capture the fleeting moments and spiritual atmosphere of the Cathedral gardens, grounds, and building. Participating photographers were asked to

share their experiences on the following themes: Peace and Contemplation; Inspiration and Joy, Simplicity, and Grandeur.

"Just as artisans over the years expressed their relationship with the Cathedral in stone, glass, and wrought iron, we wanted to invite others to do so through photography.

Notes & Comments (continued)



"Shelter," Photograph by Andrew Ilachinski

We believe visitors will enjoy seeing the Cathedral's intimate and grand spaces through others' eyes," says Julie Cooke, Director of Visitor Programs and Volunteer Services at the Cathedral. The exhibit is on view through June 30, 2003.

Restoration of Historic Baptist Church

Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, spiritual home to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is undergoing a major renovation project. Phase I of the restoration includes upgrading the church's mechanical, electrical, and structural systems. Phase II work will restore the church to its 1960s appearance when King preached there. Work on the church, which is a National Historic Site overseen by the National Park Service, is being supported with federal and private funds and donations.

British Cathedral Gets Face Lift

Restoration of a British cathedral revealed a rich history lesson along with the breathtaking beauty of the 12th-Century ceiling's original reds, blues, greens, and golds. Restorers were surprised to find that beneath the burnished images on the ceiling were timbers from northern Germany, specially imported for the job. Restorers say they had expected to find local woods, which were most often used by

medieval builders. This is "probably the earliest recorded import of bulk wood into Britain," says Julian Limentani, the architect supervising the \$11 million project. Peterborough Cathedral took 120 years to construct and features the largest painted medieval ceiling in the world—one sixth of an acre. It is covered with rows of vivid diamond shapes each framing an intricately painted monarch, saint, or hobgoblin. This is the first major restoration project for the church that has sustained centuries of sacking, burning, and plunder. Peterborough Cathedral can be found on the Internet at www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk.

Send Your News to Faith & Form

The editors of *Faith & Form* want to bring its readers the latest news of those involved in the fields of religion, art, and architecture. Send press releases and materials to the attention of Michael J. Crosbie, Editor, *Faith & Form*, c/o Steven Winter Associates, 50 Washington Street, Norwalk, CT 06854; fax: 203-852-0741; email: FaihtNForm@aol.com.

An advertisement for Meyer-Vogelpohl Custom Art. On the left is a large, white, sculpted crucifix. To its right is a framed piece of art titled "CUSTOM ART" showing a religious scene. Below the art is the text: "Meyer-Vogelpohl offers custom art in a variety of media including, wood, cloisonné, metal, marble, fiberglass and textiles." At the bottom is the company logo, a diamond shape, and contact information: "MEYER-VOGELPOHL 717 RACE ST., CINCINNATI, OH 45282 1-800-543-8264 www.mvchurchgoods.com".

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JUST ONE MORE THING...

By Betty H. Meyer



I recently learned a new word; perhaps you already know it: Biophilia. I had been thinking of writing my column on the importance of landscaping and gardens for houses of worship and my son brought a book to me entitled *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, edited by Edward O. Wilson, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and author Stephen Kellert. My son, Kirk, works for the Boston Schoolyard Initiative that involves transforming inner city schoolyards that have often been covered with asphalt for parking lots into spaces with shrubs, trees, and flowers. The biophilia hypothesis of the book he brought asserts that there is a genetic basis for our positive response to nature, that we have an innate craving for its aesthetic, cognitive, and spiritual meaning. The Japanese are right when they say, "Marry the outside to the inside." The Japanese donated 500 cherry trees to the schoolyard projects. The Initiative is trying to convince the teachers that the external can be a classroom as well as the internal. Thinking about all of this, I was reminded that when I go to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts that I never leave without standing for awhile looking down from the second floor window to a beautifully designed Zen garden. This brings the experience of the museum full circle.

If we accept that a positive response to nature is indeed a part of our innate identity as humans then we must admit that our present neglect of the environment means that we are denying our true identity and are less than whole. Theologian Paul Tillich suggested that with our space enthusiasm we moved Earth out of the center and denied it universal significance. We have all but removed the love of nature from our busy lives. Witness the destruction of trees, the lack of open spaces, water shortages, the acceptance of the artificial, etc. But according to biophilia there is direct evidence of the restorative influence of nature on individuals under stress, and that viewing scenes of nature promotes faster and more complete restora-

BETTY H. MEYER is Editor Emeritus of Faith & Form.

tion. Urban or built environments without consideration of this can furnish no such restoration.

Turning this declaration over in my mind and thinking of the current anxiety and stress in our world I asked what role the architect and artist of religious buildings can play in awakening an appreciation of nature that will lead to restoration. Architect Richard Bergmann, a former president of IFRAA, once told me that designing gardens for his architectural clients became as important to him as the structure itself. He is convinced of the restorative influence that gardens can have on parishioners who may or may not be aware that the garden affects their consciousness.

Marcus Borg, Professor of Religion at Oregon State University, has written of his own experience of nature and religion:

"In my thirties I had a number of experiences in what I now recognize as nature mysticism. In a sense they were nothing spectacular ... but they fundamentally changed my understanding of God, Jesus, religion, and Christianity. These experiences were marked by a radical amazement, moments of transformed perception in which the Earth is seen as filled with the glory of God shining with a radiant presence. They were also moments of connectedness in which I felt may linkage to 'what is.'"


Borg testifies that God is related to nature as a potter to his work.

I have always regretted the tension I have sometimes felt between the architect for the

built structure and the landscape architect. Are not both concerned with providing the best setting for the parishioner's religious experience whether it is inside or outside? Can they not arrange a marriage of the two?

I would like to think that before I enter a sanctuary I might have the opportunity to walk through or sometimes linger in a natural setting, a garden. A bench might be provided to watch the changing patterns of light in sun or shade. I would like to look at natural foliage on trees and shrubs that would evoke an awareness of texture and form. Wild flowers would be my preference over rare or exotic ones and I would avoid planting them in rows or geometric configurations, I would rejoice in the occasional rich colors and fragrances that would bring symbols and memories to mind. The crowning gift might be a fountain of water whose constant movement would speak of the constancy of the eternal.

After such an experience of the external, I think any parishioner would enter the sanctuary with more calm and emotional strength, more prepared for the internal experience of learning. Every sense then would have been involved but grounded in an analytic and intellectual capacity as well. The whole person would have experienced a new style of learning.

I am glad I learned this new word, biophilia. If it isn't in your vocabulary, you may want to learn it, too. 

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